

# Mohave County Miner.

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## The Leadville Situation.

Outside of Leadville district, where all the conditions of mining and its correlated industry, the smelting of ores, are comprehensively known, the idea prevails that the American Smelting and Refining company is pursuing a policy which is gradually crushing the life out of that camp. This feeling arises from ill-considered reports and lack of understanding. While admitting that the trust is an octopus and, like all other trusts, is exacting a larger share of gain than it is justly entitled to for the purpose of paying dividends upon excessively watered capitalization, it is by no means guilty of all the charges preferred. As it becomes more accustomed to crime it may learn to love it by and by, when we may look for some excessive indulgences in that sort of thing. But as one of my old mining comrades who was extremely fond of debating, used to say to me, "Come, now, let us be reasonable."

The extensive deposits of mineral upon which Leadville was founded were discovered twenty-four years ago. The principal sources of the great revenue which made it the wonder of its time were carbonates of lead, very rich and very easily smelted. It came to pass that in a few years of operation the greater part of these valuable ores disappeared, being replaced by refractory depositions, carrying zinc and some other elements, which had to be disposed of before the mineral could be worked in the smelting furnaces. The story, though very interesting as a whole, is too long for reproduction here. But that fact cannot be set aside, namely, that it has taken the miners and smelters of Colorado twenty-two years to master the Leadville ore problem and bring it to the stage of today. In these efforts it is not extravagant to say that millions of money have been expended. In a word we are just now, in the second year of the twentieth century, in a position to know exactly what to do with the several combinations.

When the carbonates disappeared the miners ran up against zinc. Until three years ago there was no market for Colorado zinc, and when a market was found, through a young man named Davis, who came out as the agent of Johnson & Co., of New York, exporters of that material, the difficulty lay in fitting it for export. There was not a mill in all Colorado or the West, equal to it. Then the scientists and inventors and experimenters went to work and finally fixed it. Therefore, twenty of Leadville's twenty-four years have been spent in experimenting with its ore problems. The zinc question was put to rest only last year. By the end of this year it will be a source of great profit instead of an incumbrance and a curse. It takes time to work chemical and metallurgical revolutions.

Now, then, with the fluxing ores of Leadville, the American Smelting and Refining company would have a hard time of it. That district is one of the most important fields within the entire scope of its jurisdiction. It is its main base of supplies in Colorado. It is the greatest district of its kind in the world. It is not owned by the smelting trust. One of its largest mines is the A. Y. and Minnie. I went all through the extensive workings of that property when they were at their most productive and profitable stage. Sam D. Nicholson was its superintendent, and my old time friend, C. L. Hill, its manager. It has been owned for nearly twenty years by the Guggenheims, the leading factors in the smelter trust. They ran into zinc after they had made a great mine of it and this put an end to its productive power. Since they quit, about ten years ago, I believe, it has been worked in a desultory fashion by leasers. Only a few months ago the Guggenheims, who still own it, gave a long time lease on favorable terms to Sam D. Nicholson, C. L. Hill and their associates, who are now preparing to make it one of the most productive properties in Lake county. To this end they are building a big mill at the mine, which will separate the zinc from the iron and lead. It is about completed.

The Guggenheims want the zinc not only of the A. Y. and Minnie, but of every other mine in Leadville for the large smelter they are building in Pueblo. The American Smelting and Refining company wants the other products. Nicholson will give it to them in trainloads by and by, for he knows every inch of the property as a child knows its letters.

Over 90 per cent of all the ores produced in Leadville district are low grade, containing 48 to 158 per ton. Rightfully handled and in great quantity there is fine profit in them.

In 1900 and 1901, S. D. Nicholson, as manager of the A. M. W. combination, demonstrated the existence of enormous bodies of sulphide ore below the planes which had been previously worked by Smith and Moffat. This superb manager, together with Major A. V. Bohn, of the Home Mining company, opened by their skill and daring a new era for Leadville—the Sulphide Era. Together with the men who followed their example, tremendous new resources have been developed within the last year and a half in the lower contacts. Worked together at their fullest capacity, they could supply all the furnaces of the American Smelting and Refining company in the West with that class of material. Last summer there came an outcry from Leadville that the smelters had been restricting their output of sulphide ore. It grew so vehement I went up there to examine the conditions. Within an hour after my arrival I was shown through the Arkansas Valley smelter by its superintendent, Mr. Johnson. Dropping details, two things appeared: First, through Nicholson and a few other operators a deluge of sulphides had been thrown upon the markets. To make it clear to the average reader these sulphides must be calcined or roasted before they can be smelted. The roasting capacity of the smelter was too limited by half for the supply. The deluge had come rather suddenly and it was great.

Almost simultaneously there came a financial panic in Germany, which upset the metal markets of Europe. It also affected the American market. There followed an enormous accumulation of silver, copper and lead that had to be stored and held until the market should recover. This led to a sharp decline in prices. Forced sales would have created a panic in our own country.

The clamor for an open market for sulphides continued until after the New Year came in. Meanwhile the engineers of the Arkansas Smelting and Refining company planned extensive additions to the roasting capacity, which have since been constructed. The conditions in Europe improving, exports of metals were renewed, and the vast surplus stocks began to disappear. Mr. Nicholson and some other operators came to Denver, conferred with the trust committee (in April, I think) and returned home with the assurance that the embargo against sulphides would be lifted. A few days later there came a dispatch to the Post from Leadville announcing the glad tidings. The gates were open and the sulphides began to stream out again.

Finally, Leadville is more prosperous today and has greater prospects in view than at any time since H. A. W. Tabor rose as a star of the first magnitude. That is saying a good deal, but it is true. But the day of individual mining has passed and it will not return. The lesson of today is that vast tonnages of ore must be extracted and treated, and the smelter must be enlarged to handle them. That this will follow is not a debatable question. Great stress has been laid upon the fact that the trust has closed two of its Leadville plants. It is forgotten that the capacity of the Arkansas Valley plant has been doubled to take the place of the two that are closed.—General Frank Hall, in Denver Post.

## Wedekind City, Nevada.

A Wedekind, Nev., special to the Denver Mining Record says: About four miles from Reno, Nevada, in the extreme western part of the state, is situated the new and thriving mining camp of Wedekind, named after the

discoverer of what is now the Sparks mine, but still known locally as the Wedekind. One can scarcely imagine a place less resembling the typical mining camp than this, where all the distinctive features are absent and the landscape suggests a farming community. So many camps rely on "good dumping ground" as a most important adjunct that we find many that have little else to recommend them. One naturally, when thinking of a mining camp, pictures in his mind's eye the majestic range, the rugged, pine-clad ridges, extending at right angles therefrom, little trickling or brawling streams in the canyons or up their rocky sides, perched where eagles build their nests, on the cliffs, are the shaft houses. Below them, in widening, fan-shaped slides, are the dumps, always lighter in color than the surrounding rocks and of varying dimensions, so that one versed in mining can to a considerable degree judge of the extent of the workings from the size of the waste dumps. You will find none of these out there in Wedekind. Dumps there are, to be sure, but, like ant hills, they rise from the ground. How would the average miner feel, standing on the dump of the Wedekind mine, to see below him an irrigation ditch, while to the right and left, that is to the south and east, are luxuriant fields of alfalfa.

But such is the case, and it is not strange that the discovery of mineral in such a place was due to the faith and perseverance of a tenderfoot, for who but one of these would think of sinking a shaft where the prairie dogs bark, the sage hens run in and out of the odorous sage brush and the whirling clatter of the mower is heard as it eats its way into the rank growth of the alfalfa. But it is not the mining expert nor yet the practical prospector that is responsible for our new discoveries of mineral. They come later and are useful in their time and place, but the pioneer is the tenderfoot. All who know the early history of Cripple Creek will remember how the experts of Denver, Leadville and Colorado Springs "turned down" what is now the most important gold mining camp on the continent, and but for the despised tenderfoot might still be as it was, a cattle ranch. And so with old man Wedekind. He found indications of mineral, and not knowing else than gold is where you find it, he persevered in the face of ridicule and had the supreme satisfaction of seeing his scoffers turn into solicitous friends, ready and willing to share with him his good fortune. The mine he discovered has up to the present time produced about a half million dollars. Not much as big mines go, but it has been worked but sparingly. Its purchaser, Mr. John Sparks, has slowly developed it, in the meantime erecting a modern large capacity mill, which is now in operation and is proving very successful. What makes the Wedekind a big mine is the fact that there is now opened up ore to the value of two million dollars. Even this is not remarkable, but you begin to appreciate its importance when you learn that the mine is but 200 feet deep and that drifts extend but a distance of 25 feet on the vein. A small amount of development surely to represent such value, but the explanation is found in the grade of the ore and the width of the ore body. It is claimed that the ore now going through the mill will average 25.8 to the ton. The vein so far as developed averages 35 feet in width. Here are two facts which, taken in conjunction, will open the eyes of even the uninitiated to the tremendous possibilities of the mine. Those who are familiar with the Comstock lode and its production will also remember the number of mines located on this the greatest mineral ledge the world has ever known. But is it not possible that Nevada, the home of the one, is about to give to the world another equally important. A vein having an ore shute 35 feet wide can be nothing less than another Comstock, formed under similar conditions and of practically the same ore disposition. The two camps, Virginia City and Wedekind, are but 15 miles apart as the crow flies, in the same range of

mountains and on the same mineral belt. It would appear, then, that the ore which cropped to the surface on the Comstock lode again appeared at Wedekind and that as it was followed for thousands of feet along the former, so will it be found to extend as generously on the Wedekind lode. We may expect to hear of further important discoveries in the near future, as the shafts now going down on the lode are approaching the horizon carrying the bonanza values in the Sparks mine. The Consolidated Nevada company is sinking two shafts on the vein as rapidly as men and money can do it, while Harry Ramsay, old man Wedekind's son-in-law, has already found the ore, recent values showing close to 275 in gold and silver from the bottom of his 350 foot shaft.

Others there are whose faith is equal to the expenditure of time and money, for one has only to go to the Wedekind mine and see the ore coming out, much of it running 3,000 to the ton, to feel that years could be well spent in an endeavor to find another such mine. Here, then, can we look for another Comstock, the lode whose mines made the fortunes of so many, and where the late lamented John W. Mackay found his millions.

## General Mining News.

The smelter has been shut down indefinitely, the management refusing to state when work would be resumed, further than it is likely to be from 60 to 90 days. A Chicago man has been brought on to handle the fire in the mine, who says he can put it out with the proper apparatus. Company machinists made a machine for the work, but it did not fill the requirements. It was then found necessary to send to Chicago for special machines, which will arrive soon.—Jerome Reporter.

A Mexican miner last week brought in 17 pounds of gold quartz from which Assayer Duffy Morrow secured 21 ounces of gold worth at least 148 per ounce. The rock was wonderfully rich, some of it being worth 100,000 per ton. The Mexican would not tell where he got the rock, but said there was plenty more where that came from and also that he would be back in a few days with a lot of it. Several old prospectors had their eyes on him for several days, intending to follow him out of town, but he managed to give them the slip. It is thought that the Mexican has found the long lost Adams diggings.—Copper Era.

Speaking of the trial run of the Aiken furnace at the United Verde mines, the Reporter of Jerome, Ariz., says: "It was worked for about six hours, when it was shut down. The United Verde management did not expect the furnace to work smoothly at the first trial and when it was shut down six hours after blowing in, no one had lost confidence in the new method. The furnace with a few changes, it is thought, will do all that its inventor claims for it. Old employees of the United Verde, who watched the furnace at work, generally thought well of it. The trial was made on the gray copper ore as it was taken from the mine; this the intense heat of the oil melted readily. Whether or not all the values will be saved remains to be seen after a more thorough test. The principal advantage claimed for the Aiken is that it melts ore without having to send it to the roast first; heat is supplied by oil, which is also a saving over coke."

S. L. Brannan, who has been assaying at the Garcia mine, ten miles southwest from here, came to town Wednesday and reports a good shoot of ore as having been opened up on the 300-foot level last week. The ore assays from 150 to 200 a ton and is free milling and very soft. Free gold is prominently visible in some specimens, which, of course, carry far greater values than those mentioned. The Garcia mine yielded rich returns at one time, several years ago, but has been closed down until lately, when J. B. Young of Toronto, Canada, secured control of the property, since when

considerable development and exploration work has been done. Notwithstanding some printed reports that the 10-stamp mill was again running, Mr. Brannan says the mill has not yet been started, but that three shifts have been working developing the mine. Mr. Young is reported as being more than satisfied with the looks of the property, but has been compelled to close down temporarily and will have a number of large storage tanks built to save the water which is now being encountered in the mine, it being thought that it will be sufficient with a little more work to enable them to start the mill. Until the necessary tanks can be built, a man will be kept at the mine to keep the water pumped out.—News-Herald.

American capital has absorbed another old mining landmark of Mexico. The Santa Felicitas mine, known to almost every mining pioneer of the Southwest, has been sold, the purchaser being a New York syndicate. This property is one of the most noted "antiquas" of the Caborca district of Sonora, and although only worked by the most primitive methods, has netted the owners valuable returns. R. S. Staple, a mining expert of San Francisco, who has just returned from a tour of inspection of many of Sonora's camps, stated yesterday that the new owners are making preparations for the opening up of the property in a style never before attempted in that field. The company will install a pipe line several miles in length, and will build a large modern mill for the reduction of ore on hand. At present there are 12,000 tons of ore that carries 108 to the ton in gold on the dumps, said Mr. Staple, and a large amount in sight. By very primitive methods the Mexicans sunk a shaft to a depth of 500 feet, and several cross-cuts will be run in this working before another shaft is started. The consideration was not given. The title to another famous mine of Sonora underwent a change last week. A decision was received from the supreme court of Mexico giving Douglas Bros. title to the Esperanza del Pichacho gold mines, near Bacache, in the Arizpe district of Sonora. It is reliably reported that \$1,000,000 worth of the richest of gold ore has been held at the mine waiting the decision. The ore contains free gold in marvelous quantity.—Times.

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